

Narratives for 2015 Employee Recognition Ceremony:

PERFORMANCE

CRAIG BABOWICZ is a Transportation Engineer 3 in the Bureau of Policy and Planning. He has demonstrated excellent performance through the task of preparing and updating the Department's "2014 Existing Conditions" document. This document is a comprehensive and detailed description of the extent, condition, and performance of the Department of Transportation's owned and operated systems. It includes a detailed inventory of the non-state maintained transportation systems. This document is an outward facing production that is used by FHWA, Department staff, Municipal Planning Organizations, academia, and other interested users to learn the extent and condition of the state's transportation system. Craig was supported by many individuals in the agency, but was clearly the point person for ensuring the document was completed and produced. Extensive coordination across Bureaus and agencies was required. The preparation of this document is a major undertaking by the Department and Craig's professionalism produced a superior product.

Craig was nominated by David Elder. Please join me in congratulating Craig Babowicz for his recognition award in Performance.

JAMES BEDARD is a Transportation Engineer 3 in the Bureau of Highway Operations, District 1 Bridge Maintenance unit. James has excelled as the Bridge Maintenance Engineer in a time where the funding and workload has never been greater. He oversees and schedules work for up to eight bridge repair contractor crews, along with their respective inspectors. Thanks to James, these crews effectively reduce the Department's Bridge Repair list by repairing steel, concrete, joint and countless other bridge discrepancies in the very high profile area of Hartford. He goes above and beyond his job specifications on a daily basis, and consistently accepts more than his fair share of the workload. He strives to better the Department, himself and the production of his crews. He has a great attitude and a wonderful

working relationship with everyone that he comes across. The Hartford area Bridge Maintenance unit has a valuable asset in James.

James was nominated by Douglas Harris, Bridge Maintenance Manager. Please join me in congratulating James Bedard for his recognition award in Performance.

JOHN DIBIASI is a Transportation Engineer 3 in the Office of the State Traffic Administration (we like to call it OSTA ☺). John has been with the Department for six and a half years and has worked for OSTA for the last year and a half. Among the numerous responsibilities John has with the normal day-to-day business of the office, John has eagerly taken on multiple additional projects that will improve upon the unit's efficiency and improve the services we provide to both Department staff and to our customers.

First, John is working on automating the collection and processing of 85% speed study data. There are over 3,000 spot locations on State highways across Connecticut where data is collected in order to provide vital information used by numerous offices throughout the Department. The current method takes 4 years to complete a collection cycle. John has worked with Department IT staff to create a web-based application to streamline and significantly reduce the amount of office time spent gathering the required information and boiling down the field data. This allows for more time to be spent in the field gathering data and reduces the collection cycle.

In addition, John has worked with the AEC Unit on ProjectWise to create a file structure and workflow process to improve the ability of Department staff to find and review files associated with OSTA projects. This allows the unit to link files to a web-based map making it possible for Department staff to find the information they need right from their computer.

Lastly, STARS is the Department's automated motor pool tracking system. To streamline the permitting process, OSTA began working with IT to develop a STARS tracking system to track the workflow of Major Traffic Generator reviews. Although there were many hurdles during the design of the program that took much longer than

expected to overcome, this project is again gaining momentum. Due to John's efforts and knowledge of the review process, it is expected to roll out the next phase of the program shortly.

As each of these projects advance, there is always a component of training. John has developed training guidelines for staff, making himself available to answer any questions and to advise staff on the new procedures and software.

John's dedication to the Department and his willingness to share his knowledge make this office and the Department more efficient.

John was nominated by David Sawicki and James Jurczyk from the Office of the State Traffic Administration. Please join me in congratulating John DiBiasi for his recognition award in Performance.

STEVE DIGIOVANNA is a Transportation Supervising Engineer in the Bureau of Engineering and Construction. Steve has been an outstanding employee with the Department for 32 years. He started his career in the District 3 Construction office and has been there ever since. He worked his way from an Engineer Intern to a veteran Transportation Supervising Engineer. Steve is one of the most efficient and solution-oriented people you would ever meet. The amount of workload that he is handling on a daily basis with both efficiency and accuracy is second to none. Most recently, Steve has been involved in several complex and high priority projects. Among those projects are the operational lane improvements on I-95 in Norwalk, the reconstruction of the Moses Wheeler Bridge in Milford, and the Department's first Design-Build project in Bridgeport. Steve brings his extensive experience to every situation and offers sound advice and excellent solutions to construction problems as they occur.

His contributions have been invaluable and have saved the Department time and money on project after project.

Steve was nominated by Mark Rolfe, Transportation Construction Administrator and Domenic LaRosa, Assistant District Engineer. Please join me in congratulating Steve DiGiovanna for his recognition award in Performance.

SANDY INFANTINO is a Transportation Supervising Planner in the Office of Capital Services. Sandy has an amazing ability to sustain an extensive work load while maintaining a caring attitude toward her staff. Sandy consistently offers different opportunities for staff to get more involved with the transit districts, taking staff to visit the facilities as well as attending various capital meetings. She takes the time to wait after each meeting to let staff ask questions or discuss things further. Her patience and willingness to share her wealth of knowledge concerning public transportation capital needs and the ways things work has made all the difference in helping staff understand their roles. She is the “go to” person regarding all capital needs and funding for the Transit Districts and Operators throughout the state. Under her supervision, 415 invoices have been processed this past year, almost twice as much as what was processed in 2014 and 2013. Sandy has remarkable attention to detail and the ability to follow up on the vast number of current projects, as well as managing over sixty active FTA grants alongside her manager Maureen Kent.

Sandy was nominated by her staff, Yelena Kiriyan, Kelsey Bertrand, and Michael Klick. Please join me in congratulating Sandy Infantino for her recognition award in Performance.

ELIZABETH KLEBIEKA is a Drafter 2 in AEC Applications. Elizabeth started her career at the Department in 1994 as a Board Drafter in Highway Design. Elizabeth learned to draft in MicroStation and has kept current with her skills as new software is released. While working in Design Development, Elizabeth drafted and maintained all of the Highway Standard sheets.

Last year, Elizabeth began working in AEC Applications and has been working diligently to add geospatial data and organizational information to legacy projects

scanned into ProjectWise. Some of the project plans date back over 100 years. Some of the location names no longer exist, and some of the plan structures have been reconstructed. Elizabeth's input of geospatial data and organizational information makes these projects searchable and more useful to the Department as a whole, saving time and money by not having to search through paper plans and by storing these files online for easy access for everyone. When completed, Elizabeth's work will allow the Department and the Public to access and review previous projects, some dating back to 1890's. The Department has, and will further, realize great financial and efficiency benefits from her efforts.

Elizabeth was nominated by Gabriele Hallock and Samantha Scharpf of AEC Applications. Please join me in congratulating Elizabeth Klebieka for her recognition award in Performance.

DENNIS MCDONALD is a Property Agent 1 working in the Acquisition/Relocation section for the Division of Rights of Way. Dennis negotiates directly with property owners for the purchase of land, buildings and property interests, which are critical to the betterment of the State's transportation infrastructure and to the communities and individuals serviced by this system. To perform these duties well, Dennis must be highly skilled and knowledgeable in the areas of real estate, Federal regulations and State laws dealing with acquisition and relocation, as well as appraisal methodologies and value estimating, engineering, construction concepts, and communication. Dennis possesses all of these traits, while being able to apply inventive problem solving techniques to complex and sensitive solutions.

Here is just one example of Dennis's skillful and innovative achievements:

The Department identified a bridge on Main Street in the Town of Chester that needed to be replaced. This section of town is home to residents, specialty and boutique shopping, restaurants, and local artisans. The Office of Engineering believed that four established properties would be severely impacted by the project. Typically, construction impacts like those identified would have required the forced taking of four improved properties, costing the state millions and permanently displacing numerous businesses and several residents.

Dennis was able to convince all of the property owners to donate, at no cost to the state, all of the property interests required for this project. In addition, he developed and negotiated imaginative “temporary” relocation agreements with all of the affected parties. This innovative effort will provide the contractor immediate and uninterrupted access to the construction zone. In summary, Dennis’s efforts and expertise will result in the following: a bridge needing critical upgrades which services downtown Chester will be replaced in less than one construction season; substantial savings to the state of time and money; and no businesses or persons will be permanently displaced.

Dennis was nominated by John Randazzo, Assistant Director of Rights of Way. Please join me in congratulating Dennis McDonald for his recognition award in Performance.

STEPHEN PARKOSEWICH is a Transportation Engineer 2 and the technical lead at the District 3 satellite laboratory of the Division of Materials Testing. Stephen has been in this position for the past two years of his 16-year career with Materials Testing. During this time, Stephen has gained tremendous knowledge regarding testing and the use of all types of construction materials, including Hot Mix Asphalt and Portland cement concrete. His knowledge and experience are commendable, but what makes Stephen an outstanding employee is his willingness to assist others and to share his expertise with personnel within the Department as well as outside entities such as concrete suppliers, aggregate suppliers and municipalities. Districts 3 and 3A have a large number of construction projects, including some very extensive ones and he completes all his tasks quickly and with precision. Stephen is always cooperative and has a positive attitude. He is a motivated, self-starter and performs his job duties with minimal supervision. He also uses a “team” approach by communicating with supervisors and coworkers, ensuring that everyone is on the same page. Stephen is very responsive and proactive, often anticipating problems before they occur. Recently, Stephen donated a kidney to a family member and while he was recovering from surgery, he maintained contact with the District 3 lab employees to keep his work team up to date and helped them get the work done without delay. Stephen’s dedication to both his family and to the Department was inspiring.

Stephen was nominated by John Giannini and Charles Gordon. Please congratulate Stephen Parkosewich on his recognition award for Performance.

RICK PRESCOTT is a Transportation Engineer 3 in Bridge Safety and Evaluation. Rick was instrumental in the success of the Division of Bridges' new rotation program between the Bridge Design unit and Bridge Safety and Evaluation. The program allows bridge design engineers to perform bridge inspections that will result in gaining a better understanding of the importance of proper bridge design and detailing of bridge components and determining scopes of work for bridge rehabilitation or replacement projects. After completing the program, it is expected that the participants will also better understand the role and rehabilitation capabilities of Bridge Maintenance. The rotation program also allows the participants to gain experience working on consultant inspection contracts by working closely with the Department's consultant engineers currently doing inspections for the Department. While participating in the first two cycles of the program, Rick took on the supervision of the participants; visiting them frequently at the consultant's office or in the field. He also arranged and participated in the safety training and equipped them with the necessary inspection tools.

Rick also worked extensively on a Department presentation that was given at a March 2015 Scan Workshop for NCHRP 20-68A Domestic Scan 13-01: Advances in Developing a Cross-Trained Workforce. Rick and one of the original participants of the program also presented the information to peers during a Lunch and Learn event. Rick deserves much credit for the success of the program and continues to assist and mentor the next engineer who is now assigned to the third round of the program.

Rick was nominated by his Robert Zaffetti, Manager of Bridge Safety and Evaluation. Please join me in congratulating Rick Prescott for his recognition award in Performance.

DAREN SILEO is a Crew Leader in the Bureau of Maintenance and Highway Operations, District 4, with 17 years of service. He is a dedicated employee who started his career in the Winsted Maintenance garage. Due to his hard work and extensive knowledge that he acquired throughout the years, performing many different jobs at various levels, he became Crew Leader of the Thomaston Maintenance garage 11 years ago. Daren always has a positive attitude and strives for perfection at whatever task he

is involved in, leading his crew to produce neat, accurate, and quality work that is second to none. Daren is very safety orientated and no matter how difficult the job gets, he consistently leads his crew to produce a large volume of work and will do whatever it takes to get the job done. Daren has a great personality, which allows him to have a good working relationship with his supervisor, coworkers, and the traveling public; making it a pleasure coming to work every day and working alongside of him. Daren's professionalism and strong work ethic make him the outstanding employee that he is.

Daren was nominated by Robert Hamila, General Supervisor of the Thomaston Maintenance facility. Please join me in congratulating Daren Sileo for the recognition award in Performance.

ELISSA VELEZ is a Human Resources Associate in the Bureau of Finance and Administration. Elissa has exhibited outstanding performance by providing exceptional customer service while communicating and partnering with a host of internal and external stakeholders. Elissa has been with the Department slightly less than two years and in this time, she has transformed the recruitment efforts of the Department to achieve markedly positive results. Her charges include the Unpaid Internship Program, the Summer Worker Program, as well as Connecticut Careers Trainees and recruitment efforts for mid to high level positions. She makes an intentional effort to ensure that our workforce moves in the direction of one that mirrors the communities that we serve, ultimately resulting in a positive light and contributing toward approval of the agency's Affirmative Action Plan at CHRO. Elissa's efforts support a continued, reinforced, informal education of our employees, as to why workplace diversity is important in the 21st century.

While some state agencies struggled and some made unfavorable press as to their hiring practices for the Summer Worker Program, our agency's hiring and recruitment plan received extremely positive feedback from the Department of Administrative Services, and was used as an example to other agencies. Elissa's hard work reflects the Department's commitment to recruitment in many venues by using a wide range of recruitment sources, including an extensive list serve as well as social media. Her relationships with internal staff, external educational institutions and community based organizations, have resulted in expanding the Department's presence at local career

expos and fairs at colleges in and out of CT. Her efforts have resulted in the timely placement of fulltime employees, especially Engineer Trainees as well as placing unpaid interns and summer and winter intercession workers throughout the Department. Her continued commitment and positive and professional attitude has resulted in the Department being showcased on Facebook, Twitter, a major local television station and the Hartford Courant.

In addition, Elissa achieved the development of significant expansive recruitment resources for disabled individuals and veterans, which are areas that have been underrepresented prior to her appointment. When the Department was questioned by the legislature regarding our recruitment geared toward veterans, we were able to respond with an exhaustive list of our efforts. Elissa is innovative and continually looks for new opportunities with the ultimate goal of hiring the best possible future employees for our agency and to make ConnDOT an employer of choice.

Elissa was nominated by Wanda Seldon, Assistant Human Resource Administrator III. Please join me in congratulating Elissa Velez for her recognition award in Performance.

TEAMWORK

CRAIG ALBERT, VINNIE D’ALEO, DAVE FERRARO AND CHRIS ZUKOWSKI are Transportation Engineer 3’s in District 4 Construction. These four were the Project Engineers who worked as a team to oversee 14 separate construction contracts, that together resulted in the opening of CTfastrak, Connecticut’s new Bus Rapid Transit system. CTfastrak is a 9.4 mile dedicated guideway including 10 rapid transit stations, 14 new bridges, 78 retaining walls, and a five mile multiuse trail through New Britain, Newington, West Hartford and Hartford. The 14 separate construction contracts included 5 contracts to construct the 9.4 mile mainline sections and bridges, a waste management contract, streetscape improvements on Park Street, installation of the Intelligent Transportation System, utility relocations, installation of the Flatbush Avenue exit ramps, a 9.1 acre wetland mitigation site, landscaping, ticket vending machine system, and a new fare technology system. These four project engineers administered the 14 contracts together to stay on schedule and allow CTfastrak to open and begin service in March 2015. Responsibilities included coordination with municipalities, utilities, various design firms, consultant inspection firms, contractors, Public Transit, DOT Maintenance, Amtrak and the FTA. Challenges

included working under an aggressive schedule, work adjacent to Amtrak, poor soil conditions throughout the corridor, and limited Right of Way in many of the sections constructed. These four Project Engineers achieved excellence in job performance and all four displayed highly effective communication with internal and external stakeholders. It was truly a team effort to work and achieve the common goal of contract completion, while dealing with such a wide variety of stakeholders and challenges.

Craig, Vinnie, Dave and Chris were nominated by Richard Symonds, Transportation Supervising Engineer. Please join me in congratulating them for their recognition award in Teamwork.

The next recognition award is for **AMY HARE**, Transportation Engineer 2 in Soils and Foundation, **DERICK LESSARD AND BAO CHUONG**, both Transportation Engineer 3s in State Bridge Design, and **NICHOLAS MARTIN**, Transportation Engineer 2 in State Bridge Design. This team of geotechnical and structural engineers were instrumental in the development of design standards and specifications for the Department's first use of GRS-IBS Bridges on Projects 78-217 (Bike Path in Manchester) and 76-193 (I-84 Off-ramp bridge replacement in Manchester). The Geosynthetic Reinforced Soil (GRS) Integrated Bridge System (IBS) provides an economical solution to accelerated bridge construction. Employing this technology will help agencies save both time and money in planning and executing projects.

GRS-IBS can be built with lower cost, faster construction, and improved durability. The abutment uses alternating layers of compacted fill and closely spaced geosynthetic reinforcement to provide support for the bridge, which is placed directly on the GRS abutment without a joint or bearings. GRS is also used to construct an integrated approach to transition to the superstructure. GRS-IBS bridges can be built in less time (in weeks, rather than months), which translates into less congestion; fewer road closures, disruptions, and shutdowns around work zones as well as lower materials and labor costs. Furthermore, this method has the potential for reduced maintenance costs because it eliminates joints, bearings and the bump at the end of the bridge, creating a smoother and safer transition. Once completed, the proposed GRS-IBS bridge that carries the Bike Path over Camp Meeting Road in Manchester, will also have the

distinction of being the longest GRS-IBS span built in the nation. At 176 feet in length, the span of the structure is 35 feet longer than any GRS-IBS built to date. Because of this, the Department has teamed up with our FHWA partners in developing an instrumentation plan for the post construction monitoring of the bridge to further enhance GRS-IBS technology and obtain a better understanding of the thermal interaction between the GRS-IBS structure and its integrated approaches.

This team was nominated anonymously. Please join me in congratulating Amy Hare, Derick Lessard, Bao Chuong, and Nicolas Martin for their recognition award in Teamwork.

Bridge Design's **GREGORY FUNK AND RYAN MARTIN** are Transportation Engineer 2s and **DAVID GRUTTADAURIA** is a Transportation Engineer 3. When this group of remarkable engineers came together a little over two years ago, it was the start of something special. They rejuvenated the Bridge Load Rating section to become a well-oiled machine that is setting the standard for how bridge load ratings should be performed. They are performing their duties at an extremely high level, whether it's developing spreadsheets that fill in gaps to help make the whole unit more efficient, or helping dig into the rating software to find the "bugs" when things don't make sense. Ryan has even found errors in the AASHTO Code. One way in which this group is setting the standard was by determining that a Bridge Load Rating Manual was needed. Greg took it upon himself to start the manual. He developed the initial outline, which is really what got the ball rolling. Dave and Ryan wrote chapter after chapter using the outline as the guide, doing hours of research, while still performing their everyday duties. Ryan went above and beyond the call of duty when he made sure the initial draft of the manual was finished before he left for his military deployment. Every day Dave, Greg and Ryan go above and beyond their normal duties. An example of this is training the Bridge Design Engineers how to use the Bridge Load Rating Software. They have spent countless hours making sure that Department staff and consultant engineers know how the inputs to the Bridge Load Rating Software work and how the program functions. It is truly remarkable what these employees have accomplished in such a short time.

This team was nominated by Matthew Gillis and Jon Hagert. Please join me in congratulating David Gruttadauria, Gregory Funk and Ryan Martin for their recognition award in Teamwork.

Public Transportation's **BRIAN CUNNINGHAM**, Supervising Engineer, **JAMES STUTZ and MAUREEN LAWRENCE**, Supervising Planners, **ALICIA LEITE**, Connecticut Career Trainee, **SARA RADACSI**, Planner 1, **LISA RIVERS AND PHIL SCARROZZO**, Transit Managers, and **RANDAL DAVIS**, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner are a team of employees who performed at an extremely high level in all of the activities leading up to the implementation of CTfastrak. This project was the largest transit construction project conducted by the Department in its history to date. And unlike typical construction projects, the facility would host an ongoing transit operation that had to be developed almost from scratch. This required creating a large and comprehensive set of transit services, operating procedures, maintenance procedures, safety and security plans, rolling stock and technology equipment installations, planning for an ongoing operation, and a very extensive package of public outreach, marketing and communications activities. Certainly the project couldn't have been accomplished without years of cooperation from the other Bureaus in the Department. But this team marched undaunted into unfamiliar territory and pulled together the many loose threads that needed to be woven together. Coordinating with the public, local governments and all the transit operations contractors involved in delivering the service, they created all of the operational elements of CTfastrak that led to a successful opening day package of services. Much of the initial and ongoing success of this project will be due to the efforts this team put in, working together on diverse and challenging problems to create and coordinate the many elements that will make CTfastrak a long-term success.

This team was nominated by Michael Sanders, Transit Administrator. Please join me in congratulating Brian Cunningham, Randal Davis, Maureen Lawrence, Alicia Leite, Sara Radacsi, Lisa Rivers, Philip0 Scarrozzo and James Stutz for their recognition award in Teamwork.

SAFETY

MICHAEL ROGERS is a Transportation Engineer 2 in District 2 Construction. In February, Mike went out to check on his project and he passed a vehicle on the side of the road. On his way back, he noticed the same vehicle was there and he stopped to see if the driver was okay. He found that the car was plowed in with snow, the vehicle was running, and the driver was unresponsive. Michael called 911 for assistance. The medics who responded said that the driver might have died if it had not been for Michael's call for help. Michael's awareness of the situation and quick action truly demonstrate that the safety of the traveling public is of utmost importance to the Department.

Michael was nominated by Joseph Taylor. Please join me in congratulating Michael Rogers for his recognition award in Safety.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

BETTY AMBLER - As the Librarian at CT DOT, Betty Ambler works tirelessly to seek out and obtain information important to Department functions. Quite often, employees explain how they have researched a problem. When asked where they were able to obtain the information, they will indicate that Betty was able to track it down for them. Betty utilizes her years of experience and extensive network of transportation librarians from around the country to extend the Department's reach for information beyond the physical walls of the building and past common search engines. This navigational assistance routinely saves the Department expensive fees and time otherwise lost in ascertaining best-practice information. Her numerous entries on the announcements folder demonstrate how she constantly seeks to provide new and meaningful information. She consistently goes the beyond the call of her regular duties. She exhibited great dedication to the profession as well as the Department when she took the initiative to merge two full libraries (one at the lab and one at the main building) by herself a few years ago. This involved personally cataloging and properly distributing hundreds (16 tall book shelves) worth of materials, some of archival quality dating back to the 1940s! It is very easy to overlook Betty's work behind the scenes. It is not glamorous or high-profile. But much like the oil to a mighty engine, Betty's diligent service is appreciated by employees and transportation professional librarians

around the country for keeping things in working order by going out of her way to provide relevant and timely information.

Betty was nominated by Anne-Marie McDonnell of Asset Management. Please join me in congratulating Betty Ambler for her recognition award in Customer Service.

GABRIELE HALLOCK is a Transportation Engineer 2 in AEC Applications. AEC supports over 300 users Department-wide in many different disciplines including Design, Survey, and Planning. Gabriele provides an exceptional quality of service to everyone who contacts her office, providing support and training for Civil Engineering Computer Applications such as CAD, 3D roadway modeling and Storm Drainage Design.

Gabriele arranges the live instructor lead classes. This year, Gabriele has organized and taught a combination of 15 classes. Gabriele's dedication to the Department shined through this past winter. A multiday computer class was scheduled for surveyors from all four districts at the Newington office. The first morning of the class, the original instructor had to cancel and instead of canceling the entire class, Gabriele stepped up and taught the class herself, saving the Department substantial time and money. The AEC Application unit is also tasked with assisting users with software issues. Gabriele often gets contacted with questions not necessarily related to civil engineering software because of her advanced technical knowledge and willingness to help. Fortunately, she has developed great relations within the Department to get solutions quickly back to the users.

Gabriele also wrote an 80 page Micro Station Guide for Highway Designers containing standardized workflows to be used when creating contract plans. She collaborated with other members of AEC and Highway Design to compile the needed information. This document is used in her classes as well as a support document for users to reference.

Gabriele is also being recognized for her commitment to innovation. The Civil Applications team is currently implementing more efficient methods of developing the 3D roadway and site models. She is helping to develop standards to deliver these 3D

models. Nationally, the civil industry is quickly recognizing business improvements and lower costs by changing field operations to incorporate the use of these techniques. The Federal Highway Administration has promoted the adoption of this technology through their Every Day Counts 2012 initiatives.

Gabriele demonstrates a continued commitment to teamwork and customer service. This is seen through her high standards for providing a successful training program, efficient support procedures and proficient software maintenance guidelines. She is also dedicated to developing cost saving innovations for the future success of the Department.

Gabriele was nominated by her coworkers Elaine Richard and Ronald Tellier of the AEC Applications unit. Please join me in congratulating Garbriele Hallock for her recognition award in Customer Service.

LILIANNA KALINOWSKI is an IT Analyst 2 in the Bureau of Finance and Administration. Lilianna has done a remarkable job creating the Payroll unit's "Payroll Toolkit" application. The "Payroll Toolkit" is used to calculate pay adjustments and will drastically improve and streamline workflow within the Department. This program allows the Payroll unit to work more efficiently, as it saves staff time from having to manually calculate a pay adjustment, which decreases the chance of error. Because Lilianna's program is web-based, each employee in the Payroll unit will be able to access the program from their own computer. This is a huge improvement for the Payroll unit. The prior system was DOS-based and could not function on a newer computer, so there was one computer solely dedicated to running this program. This meant that only one person could be using the program at a time. With the new program now being web-based, the entire Payroll unit can access the program from their own computer simultaneously, thereby increasing efficiency. Another time saving feature of Lilianna's program is the direct update of employee information from CORE. It cuts down on a lot of manual data entry, saving the Payroll unit time and ensuring greater accuracy.

The "Payroll Toolkit" application was a big undertaking and throughout the entire development of the application, Lilianna consistently demonstrated the utmost

professionalism and customer service. She took the time to fully understand the Payroll unit's needs and system expectations. According to the Payroll unit, Lilianna has gone above and beyond, and they cannot thank her enough for the time and energy she devoted in making such a wonderful application for the unit.

Liliana was nominated by Lisa Annis and the Payroll unit. Please join me in congratulating Liliana Kalinowski for her recognition award in Customer Service.

PATRICK ONWUAZOR is a Transportation Engineer 3 in the Bureau of Engineering and Construction's Traffic Studies unit. Patrick carries a heavy work load with demanding schedules and constantly changing priorities, which includes designing and reviewing projects, review of major traffic generators and permits, investigations of high accident locations and complaints from state representatives, town officials and citizens. In addition to his own job, he supervises three engineers. Patrick is always able to provide exceptional guidance on how to resolve the most complex issues, and skillfully navigates politically charged issues to achieve the best outcomes.

Patrick's job requires reviewing public requests, which requires informing citizens about DOT findings which many times contradict with what citizens were requesting. Relating these findings to the dis-satisfied citizens can be a major task. However, Patrick has an exceptional ability to communicate DOT findings in such a polite and comprehensive way that the complainants are both satisfied and in agreement with the outcome.

Patrick is responsible for many complex engineering designs and reviews, including his own designs and reviewing work for staff and consultants. With over twenty years of experience, he has an exceptional ability to provide constructive suggestions and find mistakes in designs and studies. Patrick uses his superior interpersonal skills and tact to present his comments in such a way that it empowers other employees' professional growth.

Patrick was nominated by Alex Mermelstein. Please join me in congratulating Patrick Onwuazor for the recognition award in Customer Service.

MARK MCMILLAN is a National Register Specialist/Architectural Historian in Environmental Planning. From identifying the historic value of a structure and being able to identify its specific unique and valuable characteristics, to selecting preservation and restoration materials and techniques, Mark is an extremely valuable asset to the Department. What makes Mark more special is his dedication to customer service. Mark has been extremely helpful in providing guidance and support in the planning, design and construction of bridge projects that seek to preserve or rehabilitate historic bridges. With his vast network of contacts and range of experience, Mark provides help to designers developing details and writing specifications for contract documents. Because of Mark's willingness to listen to the goals and objectives of bridge, highway and traffic engineers (and all stakeholders), and his open-mindedness and willingness to consider concerns that compete with the historic preservation goals, he is extremely valuable to the Department.

Mark has assisted bridge engineers on various Merritt Parkway bridge preservation and safety improvement projects and has facilitated solutions that maintain the historic character of the bridges, while improving highway safety and restoration of structural integrity. Mark has developed a relationship with key personnel of the Merritt Parkway Conservancy and their consultants that has improved the Conservancy's perception of the Department and facilitated a partnership. Because of Mark, decisions about historic structures are made with efficiency and sensitivity. Mark's presence on construction projects has virtually eliminated issues that have long been experienced with historic bridge preservation projects. Decisions are made definitively and with great expertise. Mark's credentials and ability to explain his decisions leave little to argue about.

Mark was nominated anonymously. Please join me in congratulating Mark McMillan for his recognition award in Customer Service.

CHRISTINA SMITH is a Property Agent 2 in the Division of Rights of Way, Property Management section, and she has been employed by the Department for over 10 years. Parts of Christina's duties include the sale and lease of Department-owned property in which she is required to interface with purchasers, developers, municipalities, tenants and other customers. This involves educating these customers about the cumbersome process set forth by State Statute, ensuring the process is followed, as well as negotiating a fair and equitable sales price. Her strong interpersonal skills, ability to

research complex property issues and interpret construction plans and right of way mapping, make her stand out among her peers. Christina has been recognized by both internal and external customers for her excellent service.

Of note, Christina was the lead on a complicated real estate transaction in the City of New Britain, which involved the redevelopment of property in an effort to bring COSTCO to the City. The Legislature passed a Special Act that required the Department to transfer a portion of the Route 9 right of way to the City. In order to effectuate this transaction, the Army Corps of Engineer permit for the highway had to be amended. The permit amendment required numerous real estate transactions necessitating corroboration with the City of New Britain, COSTCO, DOT Environmental Planning, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Army Corps of Engineer, Office of Policy and Management, the Board of Regents for Higher Education, Office of Attorney General, Office of State Treasurer and the State Property Review Board.

Christina, by being responsive, efficient and organized, accomplished this monumental task on time. The Division of Rights of Way has received compliments on her performance from a variety of stakeholders. Her work on this project has allowed the City and the State to create a larger tax base and generate approximately 300 jobs for the area. It also allowed the Department to create much needed final mapping for its environmental permits along the Route 9 corridor in this area.

The Property Management section is often called upon for research and special projects that don't necessarily fit in other areas of the Department. Christina is often called upon to perform these tasks in addition to her heavy workload. She is always willing to assist customers and coworkers, and yet still finds time to improve office processes. Christina has taken on a leadership role in the LEAN events for both the leasing process and the concurrence process. The goal of both LEAN events was to decrease processing time and improve job performance, which will ultimately improve customer service for the Division of Rights of Way.

Christina was nominated by Amy Martinez, Assistant Director of Rights of Way. Please join me in congratulating Christina Smith for her recognition award in Customer Service.

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AWARD

It is with great pleasure that I announce that the 2015 Employee of the Year Award recipient is **DENNIS MCDONALD**, Division of Rights of Way. Earlier in the ceremony, Dennis received an Employee Recognition Award for Performance. 2015 has been a breakout year for Dennis in the area of performance in the furtherance of the Department's Capital Transportation Program. Earlier we related Dennis's accomplishments with respect to the Chester project, which brought substantial savings to the State with regard to time and money. While Dennis was still working on the Chester project, he was brought into an emergency situation in Waterbury. The Office of Construction required that Rights of Way acquire and vacate a home adjacent to an active construction zone as quickly as possible.

Dennis was assigned the task of negotiating with an impoverished single mother of two, and relocating the family to decent, safe, and sanitary housing suitable to all of their needs. Under normal circumstances, this process would take 12 to 15 months. The Office of Construction needed this house bought and vacated in 3 months.

Dennis had many complications - the owner had defaulted on her mortgage and the loan was in foreclosure; income status, educational needs, and legal issues limited the family's replacement housing alternatives; also the existing home was not decent, safe or sanitary.

By being prepared, knowledgeable, responsive and empathetic to this owner's situation and needs, Dennis was able to place the family in housing elsewhere in Waterbury. All of the characteristics that lacked in the previous home (safe, sanitary and decent) were certainly present in the new home. In addition, through coordination with their lender, the Department was able to purchase the home quickly, and the debt service was satisfied. Dennis also physically assisted the family during their move into their new home.

Because of Dennis's efforts, a single mother and her children were able to improve their standard of living and the burden and threat of foreclosure was lifted; the Department's major construction initiative along I-84 in Waterbury could progress, unobstructed; and this family continues to receive advisory services from Dennis that will aid them in the future.

All of this was accomplished in less than 3 months, while Dennis managed dozens of other assignments for the Division of Rights of Way, including the Chester project.

Dennis's work performance and his above and beyond public service this year has been outstanding!

Again, Dennis was nominated by John Randazzo, Assistant Director of Rights of Way. Please join me in congratulating Dennis McDonald for his recognition award as Employee of the Year!